

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS

**EVOLUTION OF RUSSIA-NATO RELATIONS IN THE
1990s**

by

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EVOLUTION OF RUSSIA-NATO RELATIONS IN THE 1990s

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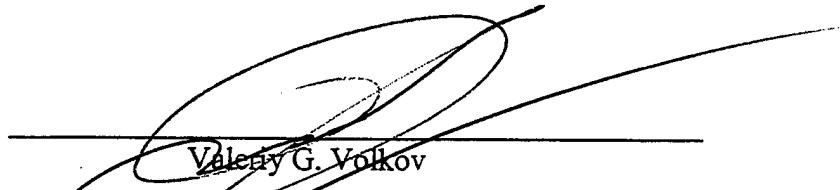
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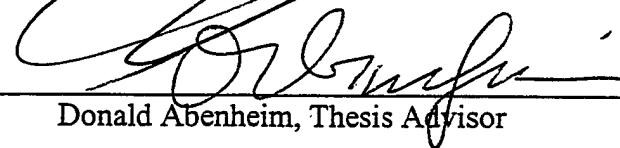
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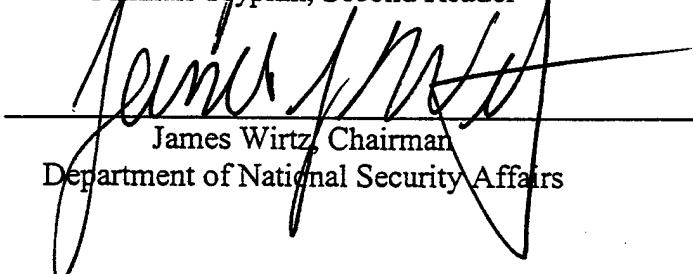
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ABSTRACT

The end of the Cold War was followed by a period of euphoric romanticism in Russia over its future relationship with Europe and the United States. Russians enthusiastically embraced the end of hostility and were looking forward to be accepted on equal terms in Europe. The situation changed when the country failed to utilize peace dividends and the economy suffered a serious breakdown.

The Russian political elite expressed concerns that this policy was the Euro-Atlantic community's attempt to underscore the dimension of Russian humiliation and to further limit Russian influence in the international arena. Russia adamantly opposed NATO advancement to the territory of the former USSR; by exploiting this hard stance Moscow, indeed, provided NATO aspirants with arguments to join the Alliance.

There is a tendency in Russia to view its relationship with NATO through the prism of the U.S. dominant role in the Alliance. This perception explains why Moscow tries to assert its position by focusing on a big power dialogue. Russian leaders attitudes toward NATO enlargement are strongly tied to their estimates of the strength of the country and their influence in the international arena.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
A.	PURPOSE OF THESIS	1
B.	GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD OF STUDY	2
II.	A NEW PARADIGM: POSITION OF RUSSIA AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR	7
A.	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR.....	7
1.	Failed Expectations (Euphoria) of the Early 1990s.....	7
2.	NATO's Policy in the 1990s	9
3.	Some Reasons for Russian Reaction to NATO Enlargement....	11
4.	Important Considerations for Russian Reaction to NATO Enlargement	17
5.	What Are Common Options for Russia and The Euro-Atlantic Community?.....	19
6.	Suggested Solutions	23
B.	IMPLICATIONS FOR DEFENSE DIPLOMACY	24
1.	Positive Experience of the U.S.-Russian Military-To-Military Contacts in the Framework of Defense Diplomacy	24
2.	Recent Russian Military Cooperation with the United States...	26
3.	Military Motives for Contact and Cooperation.....	37
C.	BROADENING EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RUSSIA.....	39
III.	CONCLUSION	47
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	53

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The end of the Cold War was followed by a period of euphoric romanticism in Russia over its future relationship with the West. Russians enthusiastically embraced the end of hostility and looked forward to be equal members of the European family of nations. The situation changed when the country failed to seize peace dividends and the economy suffered a serious breakdown. This coincided in time with NATO enlargement. The Russian political elite suspected that this policy was the Euro-Atlantic community's attempted to underscore the dimension of Russian humiliation and to further limit Russian influence in the international arena. Russia adamantly opposed NATO advancement to the territory of the former USSR; by exploiting this hard stance Moscow, indeed, provided NATO aspirants with arguments to join the Alliance on the ground of securing their sovereignty and proving their belonging to the Western community.

There has been a tendency in Russia to view the relationship with NATO through the prism of the U.S. dominant role in the Alliance; this perception explains why Moscow tries to assert its position through focusing on a big powers dialogue. This attitude is counterproductive because it raises concerns in other countries that are very sensitive to their status as independent international entities.

Russia's anti-NATO rhetoric in the 1990s, which was anti-American in its core, originated in the frustration provided by a the troublesome social and economic transition. It was exacerbated by the fact that in the past decade Russia had to fight hard for new self-identification. The thesis also argues that rhetoric was were mainly inwardly oriented, and was deeply rooted in internal problems of the country.

Russian attitudes toward NATO enlargement is strongly bound the self-estimated strength of the country, and the issue will be gradually losing its saliency as Russia's internal economic and social situation improves.

At the same time, Russia's national image remains a complex subject that will be debated within Russia for years to come. It will influence Russia's its view of foreign policy priorities. What can be predicted is that even if Russian political elite and people in general come to grips with identifying Russia's proper relationship to the West, security debates will continue on a realist-geopolitical basis.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF THESIS

This thesis examines the evolution of Russian attitudes to the Western powers in the period from 1991 until the present

The central argument of this thesis is that the evolving anti-NATO rhetoric, which was anti-American in its core, in Russia in the 1990s, had a predictable and natural character. It had its origins in the realm of political perceptions, and was exacerbated by the fact that in the past decade Russia had to fight hard for its new identity. The thesis also argues that these antagonistic reflections were mainly for internal political purposes.

The notion of the West has a peculiar meaning when discussing Russia's position toward European and Euro-Atlantic communities and alliances.

This thesis speculates on what could have been avoided in the discussions about security issues between Russia and the West since 1991.

The broad character of the subject at hand, precludes a narrow-focused case study, although the thesis incorporates a chapter describing from the author's point of view, a successful experience in initiating, developing, and maintaining military-to-military contacts between Russia and the United States. This example represents the

experience that has already been built into a foundation of defense and security cooperation between the West and Russia.

The thesis also touches upon the contingency of weakening the trans-Atlantic security bond through the process of a growing European defense identity, and its implications for Russia.

The thesis reflects the personal views of the author only, and should not be considered as reflecting the views of any government agency whatsoever.

B. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

In the past decade, the debate in Russia in both political and economic circles on the problem of European security was focused on the issue of NATO enlargement. It is not an accidental development for it to have begun from a natural desire, whether conscious or unconscious, to attribute real problems in the sphere of security to the most conspicuous relevant issue, or NATO enlargement.¹

However, there are some fundamental foreign policy issues which most of the political forces in Russia agree to recognize as valid. An extremely negative attitude towards NATO's enlargement can be identified as one of them because it became an issue that united a broad spectrum of the Russian political elite. Why do liberals and die-hard communists, doves and hawks not have many differences on this subject? It is logical to assume that there is a consensus within the Russian elite on some

¹ Tatiana Parkhalina, "Of Myth and Illusions: Russian Perceptions of NATO Enlargement." Available [On line] at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9703-3.htm>, March 2001.

fundamental issues concerning the weakened position of the country worldwide and that this agreement is not at odds with the general reactive perception of the common people.

Attempting to conceptualize the domestic sources of Russian foreign policy have led many authors in Russia and the West to emphasize the differences between various schools of thought within the Russian political elite. Classifying the Russian foreign policy community members into Atlantists and Eurasianists, and paralleling these notions with democrats and communists, has become one of the main topics in the literature on Russian policy-making. Indeed, different political actors in Russia use divergent or distorting analytical lenses through which they view the same world in many different ways. The invoked conceptualization of the state is that the nation and security depends on episodic or pursued needs. While the government develops concrete programs and concepts, the opposition uses publications, program materials and rhetoric simply to promote its own interests disguised as positions.²

This inevitably leads to different expressions of what Russia is. Russia's major security challenges, political goals and instruments of security policies are described differently as well.

Analyzing Russia's reactions to geopolitical changes in the world requires answering some basic questions. How do the leading political forces in Russia map

² Igor Zevelev, "NATO's Enlargement and Russian Perception of Eurasian Political Frontiers," available from the author at zevelev@marshallcenter.org.

Eurasia after the breakup of the Soviet Union? How do cognitive maps of Eurasia appear on the foreign policy agenda? Will Russian hypothetical attitudes towards NATO's acceptance of former Soviet republics, or NATO moving directly to Russian borders, be dramatically different from reacting to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joining the Alliance in particular?

The premise of this thesis is that Russia has a legitimate right to identify itself as a European state. Political elites both in the West and East often emphasize speculative identifications aimed at achieving circumstantial or parochial benefits. It never hurts to have an image of the enemy at hand that can be used to divert public opinion from the real problems, or as a bargaining chip.

Therefore, the existence of a gray zone in defining Russia's position toward Europe is maintained both in Russia and the West mainly for political reasons. There is nothing abnormal about this phenomenon, but since it takes place mainly in the realm of perceptions, a potential danger for making incorrect decisions based upon incorrect image projections is significant, especially where public policy-making is concerned.³

Geographic continuation of Europe into Russia has always garnered special importance in the discussion of the political frontiers of the latter, or in other words, how to properly define the limits of the two entities. This had not been an issue until

³ Tatiana Parkhalina, "Of Myth and Illusions: Russian Perceptions of NATO Enlargement." Available [On line] at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9703-3.htm>, March 2001.

the time of Peter the Great, when in the beginning of the 18th century, he aggressively pushed the country to increase its participation in European affairs. However, even after that, Russia was usually considered an outsider and a foreign power, and very culturally and politically different from Europe.

Nevertheless, Russia played a significant role as a balancing power. Some examples of this balancing act occurred in the beginning of the 18th century against Sweden; in the beginning of the 19th century against Napoleon's France; and in the middle of the 20th century against Nazi Germany. At least twice, and for long periods of time, Russia also played the role of the European "policeman" and the power adhering to the achieved status quo in Europe after the war with Napoleon, and also after 1945.⁴

The victory over Nazi Germany, which was paid for heavily by unprecedented sacrifices, brought Russia, the stereotypical name for the Soviet Union at the time, to its apex in terms of influence in international relations. Russia, or the Soviet Union, received its most significant and influential role, or that of sharing, with the United States, the new bipolar world split into spheres of influence and control.

The collapse of the Soviet Union created an unprecedented security paradigm by leaving Russia with a huge territory, a large amount nuclear weapons, and vast natural resources. However, it was economically crippled. On the one hand, this

⁴ Igor Zevelev, "NATO's Enlargement and Russian Perception of Eurasian Political Frontiers," available from the author at zevelev@marshallcenter.org.

caused fears of chaos and unpredictability in international relations, especially in the former Soviet Bloc, and raised serious concerns about the eastern borders of the European Union. Thus, the new situation enabled the advancement of what later would be called the unipolar world with the United States at the lead.

However, one of the most troublesome outcomes of the new situation was that the Russian public and political elite, barely and reluctantly accepted, the relegation to a significantly lower international status after being a major world power. The painful, but uncertain public reaction to the loss of superpower status and prestige, combined with the increase in internal problems, will be exploited and persistently shaped by the political establishment into national exceptionalism under different names. The fact that these anti-western factors, such as the United States and NATO, do not have a substantive, but a perceptual character, is revealed in a search for labels such as “westernizers,” or “patriots,” for their supporters.⁵

This paper is an attempt to look at the particular factors affecting Russian perceptions and to speculate on how the latter translate into politics.

⁵ Ibid.

II. A NEW PARADIGM: POSITION OF RUSSIA AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

1. Failed Expectations (Euphoria) of the Early 1990s

The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 was greeted with euphoria on both sides of the Iron Curtain but this soon gave way to concerns over more pragmatic issues such as the transition to democracy in the old Soviet Union, the creation of peaceful relationships between its former constituent members, and their survival. Another crucial question was how they would relate to their former ideological enemy, the West, and, in particular, to NATO.⁶

The end of the Cold War created early hopes that Western-Russian relations would be warm and broad based. These hopes have been dashed by exaggerated expectations, a lack of political will, and recurring statements reminiscent of the Cold War.⁷

However, what has been termed the “honeymoon period” (1992-1993) in U.S.-Russian relations, with the United States symbolizing the West and when agreements

⁶ Derek Hunns, “Russia and NATO”, available [On line] at <http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/number4/hunn.htm>. April 2001.

⁷ Laura Payne, “U.S.-Russian Security Relations”, available [On line] at http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/briefs/vol3/v3n26fsu_body.html

such as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, START-3 in January 1993 came quickly, and when the anticipation of good future relationships was high, soon turned into disenchantment. While many United States policymakers considered Russia to be a continuation of a defeated adversary, in other words, the Soviet Union, Russian politicians have come to believe that the United States seeks even further hegemony and they will do everything to endure Russian weakness.⁸

Russia became suspicious of the actions of the United States in Eastern Europe. The situation started changing very quickly when initial considerations about a possibility of NATO enlargement into the territory of former Warsaw Treaty countries were made public.⁹

One of the frequent passages in political commentaries of those days is an anecdotal reference to a story that when, at the talks over the reunification of Germany, Western leaders promised M. Gorbachev that NATO would never incorporate any of the former Soviet Bloc countries.¹⁰

The drive to start the process of NATO enlargement was formally launched by President Clinton at the Summit meeting in Brussels in January 1994. The Alliance leaders also stated that they expected and would welcome NATO enlargement which would incorporate their countries as part of an evolutionary process that was taking

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ No transcripts were ever presented in the latest publication on this subject in "Nezavisimaya gazeta", 05 June 2001, it was referred to as "according to claims by the former President of the USSR M.Gorbachev ... Western leaders assured him ..." .

into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe, although NATO did not invite any particular country into NATO until the Madrid Summit in July 1997.¹¹

That decision led the Russian political elite to adopt easily a position of suspicion and mistrust, even though at that particular time, there were still no examples that the Russians could use to justify their concerns.¹²

2. NATO's Policy in the 1990s

Soon after their resignations, Warren Christopher, Secretary of State in 1993-1997, and William Perry, Secretary of Defense in 1994-1997, argued for a new NATO mission in October 1997:

It is time to move beyond the enlargement debate. Adding the new members is not the only, or even the most important, debate over the alliance's future. A much larger issue looms: What is the alliance's purpose? Their answer was that the alliance should be defending common interests, not territory. 'Shifting the alliance's emphasis from defense of members' territory to defense of common interests is the strategic imperative.¹³

¹¹ "NATO Enlargement", available [On line] at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/m970708/infopres/e-enl.htm>, April 2001.

¹² Celeste A. Wallander, "Russian-U.S. Relations in the Post-Cold World," available [On line] at <http://www.harvard.edu/~ponars/POLICY%10MEMOS/Wallander70.html>. March 2001.

¹³ Article by Warren Christopher and William Perry, "NATO's True Mission," *New York Times*, October 21,

Among the major threats to common interests are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disruption of oil supplies, terrorism, genocidal violence and wars of aggression in different regions. It is interesting that a threat coming from an anti-Western nuclear power deeply suspicious about NATO intentions on the borders of the Alliance was not mentioned at all.¹⁴ The territory of Alliance members was not viewed to be seriously threatened in any foreseeable future. The main feature that was characteristic of the discussion of NATO goals was the talk about defending common interests, rather than territory. This had two big ramifications. First, there emerged a considerable number of states expressing the desire to share those interests, based upon claims of common values. Values became notionally and misleadingly, equal to interests. Second, the same process delineates vast areas to the East, which, based on historical prejudices, are never expected to reach an adequate understanding of accepted norms of political behavior, which thus implies no prospect for sharing values and interests.

The first factor became a driving force for NATO territorial expansion, which provided for some inconsistency between the stated non-existence of a need to be concerned about adding defended territories as there was no threat, and a desire to enlarge the shared interests club.

1997, available from the archives [On line] at www.time.com.

¹⁴ Igor Zevelev, "NATO's Enlargement and Russian Perception of Eurasian Political Frontiers," available from the author at zevelev@marshallcenter.org.

So far, NATO has been trying to alleviate this contradiction, which is eagerly perceived in Russia. The year 1999 was a symbolic year in this sense. The Kosovo operation and the formal admission of the three new members was an indication.

3. Some Reasons for Russian Reaction to NATO Enlargement

For Russia, territorial enlargement has been the central issue and forms the background for all other problems related to NATO. One of the reasons for this lies in a significantly undermined influence of Russia in international politics. On the surface, the fact that Russia is even now a big country was the only argument that it could use to claim that it was still a great power. This was logically followed by invoking geopolitical, realists' theories, and by further asserting the unquestionable character of national sovereignty, and implying that humanitarian concerns are mostly disguised attempts to infringe on the latter. Russia's reaction to the Kosovo operation in 1999 can be explained in the context of NATO enlargement and decreased influence of Russia on the diplomatic scene.

For the purpose of analysis, it is important to discern between two connected, but still very different issues. The first, called Expansion One, is the NATO enlargement which has already occurred, and the second is the possible second round of NATO enlargement called Expansion Two. The first has become a reality while the second is more than probable in the future.

The Alliance's Strategic Concept approved by the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D. C. on April 23 and 24, 1999 said it explicitly:

NATO expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance, strengthen its effectiveness and cohesion, and enhance overall European security and stability... No European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration.¹⁵

From the Russian perspective, the critical point is not the second round *per se*, but whether it will include any of the former Soviet republics, namely the Baltic states or the Ukraine. Expansion Two may be perceived by Russia as relatively acceptable if it is limited to the inclusion of countries that have almost never been perceived as true allies, or as significant actors in terms of zones of influence. In this case, it could be a relatively easy second wave of expansion to which Moscow would not react excessively.

The official NATO documents and statements avoid making a distinction between potential candidates solely on the basis of having formerly belonged to the Soviet Union.

¹⁵ The Alliance's Strategic Concept. Approved by the heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D. C. on 23 and 24 April 1999 (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 1999), pp. 11-12.

American foreign policymakers keep saying that historic and geographic factors, such as formerly being a part of the Soviet Union, cannot exclude certain countries from NATO. Former deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said:

The process of enlargement is ongoing. No one is going to be excluded on the basis of geography and history. And there is no reason why the second round should be any more difficult or controversial than the first. In fact, it should be easier.¹⁶

That statement was supported by what has always exacerbated Russia's reaction as former Defense Secretary W. Cohen similarly said:

the door remains open. It's not geographically confined. Whichever countries wish to become part of NATO, if they satisfy the requirements, they'll be considered for membership. There will be no determination made by anyone outside the alliance.¹⁷

Assumptions about the irrelevance of geography in official statements and documents are diplomatic code words which mean that Russia is attempting to define certain areas in Europe as zones where the Russian opinion will more important than the views of other countries. According to W. Cohen, these attempts will be ignored.

Paradoxically, in practical discussions on the admittance of the former Soviet republics into NATO, a geographic factor, namely the proximity of Russia, does play a role. A closer look reveals that the realists' approach is not an exclusive trademark of Russia. Some Western representatives, especially American conservative representatives, like to portray Russia as an authoritarian and expansionist bear and its

¹⁶ *New York Times*, May 4, 1998, as cited in the article by Sergey Rogov *Security Relations between Russia and the Western World*, available [On line] at http://www.fsk.ethz.ch/publ/studies/volume_1/Rogov.htm.

¹⁷ Robert Burns, "Russian Opposes More NATO Expansion," available on search from the Pro Quest Database, requested 12 Oct 2000.

neighbors as potential victims that must be protected by the West. This more than perfectly matches the reactive Russian logic by deepening the suspicion of the Russian political elites towards any liberal talk about shared values and openness of the Alliance to new democratic members. For example, a *New-York Time* columnist W.Safire advocated taking into NATO Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Baltic states, the most Westernized nations of Eastern Europe, and ultimately the Ukraine as it privatizes:

The time to push the protective line eastward is now, while Russia is weak and preoccupied with its own revival, and not later, when such a move would be an insufferable provocation to a superpower.¹⁸

This is a very recognizable theme and a nice present to the Russian political establishment. Russians are well equipped to discuss the issue of NATO's expansion in realists' terms and eagerly present their own counter arguments. Russian interpretation of geographic and historic factors differs dramatically from those held in the West. However, acknowledgement of the importance of these real arguments proves to the Russians that their concerns are valid.

There are very serious reasons to believe that the second round, if it includes any former Soviet republics, will be much more controversial than the first round.

Russian opposition to Expansion One can be explained by the fear that it was only the beginning. The real threat, according to many Russians, is further expansion into the territory of the former Soviet Union. To them, it would not only signify a

¹⁸ As cited in the article by Sergey Rogov, *Security Relations between Russia and the Western World*, available [On line] at http://www.fsk.ethz.ch/publ/studies/volume_1/Rogov.htm.

dramatic shift in the terms of the balance of power, but would also cut perceptual links with the great past, with the once again perceived geopolitical gains of the enormous sacrifices made by earlier generations. World War II started for Russia with the invasion of its Western borders by the power with which Russia had a non-aggression pact. As a result, Russia lost about 28 million people in that war. This explains why it is so deeply rooted in Russian history to not take into account proclaimed intentions, but to assess a probable military threat from the balance of power approach.

Russians are deeply apprehensive about the strengthening of any foreign military capabilities on its Western borders. Adding new members to NATO is viewed as a way of doing so, which is why the Russian parliament, sensitive to the public disposition, reacted by calling NATO enlargement the most serious security threat to Russia after the end of World War II.

The second round of NATO expansion, if or when it happens, will probably have far greater domestic consequences than Expansion One. The Russian perception of the importance of the Central European states and the Balkans differ from that of other territories which once used to be a part of one big country. This particularly applies to the Ukraine.

There has also been another significant phenomenon in the post-Cold War Russia. Many Russians still perceive the collapse of the Soviet Union as a negative event, which, as some believe, still might not be the end of the Soviet Union.

The presidential candidate in the 1995 elections, retired general Alexander Lebed, stated the widespread Russian attitude of the deceased Soviet Union as follows: "and the Soviet Union was no more, those who do not regret its collapse lack a heart, but those who think that it will be possible to recreate it in its old form, lack a brain."¹⁹

The importance of the attitudes described above lies primarily in the fact that the Soviet Union, or what could be called the Soviet Empire, including the Baltic states, not Russia proper, was the alleged homeland for most Russians.

In the long run, the changing character of NATO and the good relationship between the Euro-Atlantic Community and Russia are much more important to the latter than adding or not adding some new members to the Alliance. However, the point at when trust prevails, has not yet been attained. Kosovo changed the situation for the worse, which is why the further enlargement of NATO may seriously aggravate tensions along the lines of separating the notional *de facto* Europe from the rest of its legitimate areas.

The Russian position is better explained not by the generic negative view of country leaders on NATO enlargement, but by the fact that the expansion of the Alliance touches very sensitive issues in the Russian identity.

¹⁹ Aleksandr Lebed, *Za derzhavu obidno*, Russian newspaper *Moskovskaya Pravda*, archives: May 1995.

4. Important Considerations for Russian Reaction to NATO Enlargement

Apparently, whatever factors determine Russia's reaction to NATO enlargement, its efficiency is very low. Ironically, Russia, adhering to loud rhetoric and demonstrating its irreconcilable position towards the further enlargement of NATO, has actually, to a certain extent, intensified the process.

Today, at least three main angles of viewing the role of NATO and the associated possible gains can be identified.

The first is the American goal to maintain its strategic leadership through the leverage it has as the most powerful member of the Alliance. This allows the United States to remain involved in European affairs where it has a legitimate voice.

This is often presented in Russia as the most important argument against relying on NATO as the central collective security institution in the Euro-Atlantic zone. However, the question is if the United States is present in Europe against the will of the other countries. The answer is no. NATO has proven to be a stable and useful security scheme for Europeans first and foremost.

This constitutes the second angle of the European view of NATO. Russia's attempts at using phraseology about pure European concerns cannot achieve any positive goal in the least, and, at most, it can lead to a reputation as a spoiler.

The third angle seems to be the most important in the context of a perceptual bias in this thesis. It appears that Russia failed to recognize that the process of NATO enlargement is no longer in the control of the big players, which includes the United States.

Discussions on NATO enlargement today are initiated not from inside the Alliance. Many publications generated from inside NATO actually demonstrate a certain degree of prudence.²⁰

NATO enlargement is pushed from the outside, and the set of claims by the aspirant countries cannot be easily thwarted, even if there were such a strong desire among NATO members. The reason for this is simple. The drive for membership is not imposed by somebody else's will, but is rooted in a democratic process and pushed forward by democratic institutions of sovereign states.

In this regard, defense and security issues of NATO enlargement entered the realm of domestic political agendas and civil-military relations in aspiring countries.²¹

The latter factor, probably, is among other reasons why the discourse on NATO enlargement has taken on a new very noteworthy aspect. New members should be invited to join NATO as soon as possible exactly because Russia objects to

²⁰ Some examples are: "NATO Enlargement, Issues and Answers" by S. Grieg, J. Arnold, INSS, available [On line] at <http://www.airpowr.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apjsum98/arnold.html>, March 2001; "Russia and NATO" by Derek Hunns; "Russian-U.S. Relations in the Post-Cold War World" by Celeste Wallander.

²¹ Glen Segal, "NATO Enlargement: International Relations or Civil-Military Relations," available [On line] at <https://wwwcc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/conf/seg02/seg02.html>, April 2001.

it, and Moscow should not be able to hope to veto or interfere in another country's affairs without an invitation.²²

5. What Are Common Options for Russia and The Euro-Atlantic Community?

Is it possible for Russia to achieve greater influence in European affairs and at the same time foster its security? The most understandable for Russia, in the guise of a realistic approach, might be to not alienate the country from the much more powerful Alliance, but integrate it into European security structures or at least into some of them.

Hierarchies of national interests are different in Russia than in the United States and Europe. Any issues related to the territory of the former Soviet Union rank very high in Russian priorities because they are linked to the fundamentals of Russian self-perception. It is impossible for Russia to be indifferent to the policies of its neighbors. To assure that Russia's policies in the region stem from understandable security concerns, the United States, Europe, and NATO would be wise to actively pursue engaging Russia in a collaboration on a wide variety of issues. Russia seeks recognition as a great country, which deserves a much more sophisticated policy than simply the suggestion that it is another instant state created on the ruins of the Soviet empire.

²² Articles in the Wall Street Journal "Let the Balts Join NATO" and "Havel's Question", available [On line] at <http://ebird.dtic.mil/May2001/e20010514let.html>, 14 May 2001.

The following suggestion goes beyond the European dimension, but here it is and is especially valid: "...the United States needs to recognize that Russia is a great power, and that we will always have interests that conflict as well as coincide."²³

When the Russian political elite gains confidence that Russia's status is not subject to question, it will very soon cast off some sort of inferiority complex which leads to unpredictable impulses and over-reacting. The following statement by C. Rice is also relevant not only for the American context: "...it must be recognized that American security is threatened less by Russia's strength than by its weakness and incoherence."²⁴

Due to its geographic position, human and natural resources, Russia has a legitimate right to strive for an equal level of influence in European security affairs. The most efficient and acceptable way of doing so is integration.

However, is it feasible to think, even in terms of some remote future, that Russia would acquire equal say in European defense structures, including closer participation in NATO affairs? Will Russia's membership in NATO, or maybe with some special status, ever become something more than a farfetched mental exercise? What are the possible alternatives if the answers are negative or hesitant?

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²³ Condoleezza Rice, *Promoting the National Interest*, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2000, Volume 79, No. 1, p. 59.

²⁴ Ibid.

The following is a characteristic example of Western assumptions that correspond well with the previously discussed Russian inclination to explain international politics in the terms of balance of power, which is exactly the approach that Moscow is often criticized or even ridiculed for, and which is exploited to justify the continuation of neo-containment policies.

Much of American and European geopolitical and strategic thinking about Eurasia has been based on the fear of Russian imperialism and attempts to prevent its revival. Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose views, of course, do not represent the entirety of American perceptions but remain influential in Washington's academic community, has contributed to this approach significantly. He warned American policymakers about Russia's designs to revitalize a regionally hegemonic Russia...to become again the strongest power in Eurasia. Unlike the old centralized Soviet Union and its neighboring bloc of satellite states, the new arrangements would embrace Russia and its satellite states within the former Soviet Union in some kind of confederation.²⁵

Instead, Brzezinski suggested another, much smaller, confederation, when he wrote about the desirability of "a loosely confederated Russia – composed of a European Russia, a Siberian Republic, and a Far Eastern Republic."²⁶ In other words, Russia, even with its present borders, is too big for Brzezinski. He sees Russia in its

²⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Premature Partnership*, *Foreign Affairs* March/April 1994, available on search from the Pro Quest Database, requested 10 Oct 2000.

²⁶ Ibid.

present form as a force that can obstruct the American geopolitical goals of dominating Eurasia.

This point of view does have its audience both in the United States as well as in Europe, and is capable of preventing Russian admission into Euro-Atlantic security structures.

Another possible delay in this process could come from a completely different way of thinking which maintains the overall perceptual bias of this thesis.

What has not yet been mentioned is the important fact that national Russia, in the view of many common people and the elite of this country, includes all the Russian diasporas in the near abroad, and thus spreads well beyond the borders of the Russian Federation.²⁷ Abstract notions of a nation-state are mechanically applied to the region, which has not had any stable historic experience and where “national” primarily means ethnic. Building “national” Russia may also alienate non-ethnic Russians within the Russian Federation. This fact makes calls for a national Russia extremely dangerous for both regional and global security.

Paradoxically, thinking of Russia as a potentially European state may slow its integration into international institutions and security arrangements. The size of the country, its diversity, nuclear arsenal, instability on its Southern borders, economic problems, the existence of multimillion-member diasporas, and the peculiarities of

²⁷ This subject was widely discussed in the Russian media during the last Presidential campaign.

national identity make Western countries very cautious when discussing admitting Russia into European or transatlantic institutions as a member.²⁸

Acknowledging legitimacy of the latter considerations, a possible suggestion for the West may be to recognize Russia as a continuation of itself, seamlessly extending into a significant and important other.

For Russia, joining NATO in any imaginable form has perceptual difficulties also. The major difficulty, as was repeatedly mentioned previously, derives from the balance of power approach. Based on the assumption that a political-military alliance has to be geared against some threat, Russia cannot help but to be suspicious of the true meaning of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. In addition, Russian political thinking tends to emphasize NATO's military dimension, implying a greater significance in the hierarchical structures and differences in the real clout each member wields.

6. Suggested Solutions

It could be recommended that the relationship between the Euro-Atlantic security community and Russia should be strengthened not through $n+1$ formulae, but rather by the means of individual relations with Russia, becoming a network of intertwined connections with the West, and remaining bilateral for Russia at every instance.

²⁸ A. Salmin, *Russia, Europe, and new world order*, Polis 2, 1999, pp. 10-31.

On the one hand, this system is better suited for developing confidence because it provides diverse channels of communication. It affords greater flexibility towards alleviating inevitable disagreements as well.

On the other hand, integrated Western communities–Russia relationships should be institutionalized and maintained in parallel with bilateral networking. This combination is particularly well suited for constituting legitimacy, firstly, because it provides a forum, and secondly, its diverse system prevents allegations of usurpation of important decision-making by bigger players.

B. IMPLICATIONS FOR DEFENSE DIPLOMACY

Defense diplomacy here actually implies two major elements. One is an established system of attaché office representatives, and the second is military-to-military contacts in the form of a broad variety of exchanges between militaries from different countries.

In the light of democratic civil-military relations, because decisions are made in the political realm, defense diplomacy by itself does not guarantee the prevention of problematic security issues.

1. Positive Experience of the U.S.-Russian Military-To-Military Contacts in the Framework of Defense Diplomacy

The major reason for conducting defense diplomacy as the first element implies, by all means, should be seen as maintaining undistorted channels of contacts.

As for the second element, trust must be developed between counterparts who have first line access to weapons, and engendering it to higher political echelons.

Despite uncertainties in U.S.-Russian diplomatic relationships, military-to-military contact programs between the two states continued to evolve and were supported by senior military officers on both sides until the Spring 1999 bombing of Serbia put them on hold.

Over the past decade, the military organizations of the United States and Russia have established and institutionalized a set of programs and cooperation with each other. These activities received continued renewal agreements and resulted in regular contacts which were strengthened overall, and were even steadily strengthening in scope even as U.S.-Russian diplomatic relations with each other were strengthening. That development was evolving smoothly until the NATO bombing of Serbia put them on hold.

Military-to-military programs continued, even in an era when the security relationship between the United States and Russia was sometimes shaky. Russian spokesmen have universally condemned NATO expansion as a threat to core Russian interests, while U.S. policy makers repeatedly criticized Russia for its failure to prevent the export of sensitive technology to countries of interest to America. There had been repeated disagreements on how to react to Serbian activities in Kosovo before NATO action began. Some observers saw these diplomatic conflicts over

security policy as heralding a resurgence of hostility between the two states.²⁹ Yet, as described below, U.S.-Russian military contact and cooperation programs were only tangentially affected for years by the difficulties of the post-Cold War cooperative order. In fact, the very existence of these programs demonstrated the lack of hostility between the two sides' military organizations, despite the sometimes acrimonious diplomatic exchanges that have occurred in recent years.

Programs continued even though some officials of the Pentagon and the Russian General Staff viewed these programs as a waste of time, and diverting their organizations from their primary missions of preparation for potential future warfare.³⁰

These programs were intended to serve military officers by providing both sides opportunities for training and learning new skills, providing the Russian side a "voice", or a degree of influence in international security matters, at a time of decline in state power; and providing both sides with "transparency".

2. Recent Russian Military Cooperation with the United States

The history of U.S.-Russian military ties has been explored elsewhere,³¹ and need not be recounted here. The programs that put officers from both sides in contact

²⁹ Pavel Felgengauer, "U.S. Congress Approves Sanctions against Russia: The Cold War Is Still on for the U.S. Law-Makers," Segonya, May 25, 1998, as translated by RIA-Novosti news service.

³⁰ A colloquial phrase in use by Russian officers - "military tourism."

³¹ Scan M. Lynn-Jones, "A Quiet Success for Arms Control: Preventing Incidents at Sea," *International Security* 9 (Spring 1985): 154-184; Michael J. McCarthy, "Comrades in Arms: Russian-American Military-to-Military Contacts Since 1992," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 9 (December 1996): 743-78, especially 774-50.

with each other cover a wide range of activities, ranging from on-site inspections mandated by several arms control and reduction treaties to the consultations, workshops, and joint exercises occurring on a multilateral level between Russia and NATO as a result of the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security. All of these programs were intended to enhance stability in the post-Cold War security order.

Three types of bilateral military-to-military efforts have been especially significant in fostering good working relations between U.S. and Russian officers, and are mentioned below:

- the 1989 Dangerous Military Activities (DMA) Agreement, designed to prevent the unintentional or miscalculated use of force in peacetime
- officer conferences, unit visits, and joint exercises that are designed as confidence and security-building measures, to break down enemy images and foster trust and communication between military services in the two countries
- joint peacekeeping activities, most notably Russian participation alongside U.S. forces in the NATO-led Implementation Force (EFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia under United Nations auspices, which continued even after NATO air strikes in Kosovo began.

It was the DMA agreement, and particularly the negotiations leading up to it, that fundamentally set the stage for the institutionalization of U.S.-Russian military-

to-military contacts that followed. This was the first set of negotiations in the history of U.S.-Soviet relations to be primarily headed, designed, and signed by military officers on both sides, and it flowed from the unprecedented one-on-one meetings held by Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, William Crowe with his Soviet counterpart, Chief of the General Staff Sergei Akhromeev, during the latter's 1998 U.S. visit.

The DMA agreement was designed "to reduce the possibility of incidents between [our] armed forces, to facilitate rapid peaceful resolution of those incidents which result from dangerous military activities, and to assure the safety of personnel of ships, aircraft, and land-based installations."³²

To accomplish these tasks, the DMA agreement set out a series of proscriptions and prescriptions designed to regulate everyday military behavior in contexts where the two sides might encounter each other on a daily basis. Examples included limits on the use of aircraft lasers when in proximity to forces of the other side, prohibition against the use of command and control jamming against the other side, and the prescribed use of particular radio frequencies and other communications procedures in the event of dangerous unforeseen incidents or accidental incursions into the other side's national territory.³³ Most importantly for the military-to-military contacts that would follow, the DMA agreement created a permanent Joint Military

³² See "Text of the Dangerous Military Activities Agreement," in Reducing the Risk of Dangerous Military Activities, 19-26.

³³ Ibid.

Commission for the express purpose of having senior officers meet annually to discuss matters of concern to either country.

The substantive coordination and policy cooperation that this agreement created are imperfect, but the kind of transparency that the agreement created, in this case, transparency about the immediate intentions of the military forces of the two sides during their daily tasks, had immense value in the eyes of military planners on both sides as a way of defusing potential conflict.

To cite one example, in a June 1992 meeting in Moscow, senior Russian General Staff officers privately raised concerns with U.S. Air Force officers about U.S. violations of Cuban airspace during Haitian refugee crisis operations. According to an American observer, "Having this issue successfully resolved with a minimum of fanfare helped build trust and confidence between the leaders of the two forces." It also furthered the Russian goal of gaining a voice in the international system. According to Pentagon officials, this program has succeeded so strongly in allowing each side to express its concerns that no claims have been made by either side in several years.³⁴

What perhaps best illustrates the importance that military officers attached to the DMA program is the fact that on both sides they had to fight bureaucratic battles to win the right to negotiate an agreement of military design under military

³⁴ Kimberly Marten Zisk, "Contact lenses: Explaining U.S.-Russian ties," available [On line] from ProQuest database, search (military AND military AND contacts AND Russia).

leadership. On the U.S. side, it is well known that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) spent a great deal of political capital to win over both civilians in the Pentagon and diplomats in the State Department to get approval for the negotiation process to go forward. Some think that Crowe may have devoted so much political effort to this issue that he damaged his ability to pursue other items on the JCS agenda.³⁵ The hostility that senior U.S. officers faced was not merely the result of typical bureaucratic infighting over roles and resources, but also arose because civilians in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush feared seeming too "soft" on the Russians and sending the wrong signal to a potential adversary.³⁶

Military officers on both sides clearly would not have concentrated so many resources and so much effort on a program that was clearly experimental if they thought it would have only minimal value. Instead, significant individuals on both sides decided that the benefits of military-to-military cooperation outweighed the risks.

The perceived success of these senior officer conferences has contributed to the second major area of growth in U.S.-Russian military ties in recent years, which is the official contacts between military officers and troops at all levels, including unit-to-unit visits and exercises of various kinds. As these programs have expanded in scope, the cooperative relationship between the two sides has fundamentally shifted

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

as well. Earlier, when the Cold War was still winding down, the primary goal of military contact programs was limited to the prevention of accidental conflict. Later, the goals have expanded to include building active trust among participants and encouraging common norms of military professionalism.³⁷

Although these military contacts began in the Gorbachev era on an ad hoc basis, they were institutionalized in 1993 by a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation on Defense and Military Relations.³⁸ The Memorandum mandates a variety of periodic, usually annual, meetings between senior military officials at various ranks, which are often used to resolve specific issues or to convey important messages between government or military leaders.³⁹

Again, these meetings have given the Russian military an opportunity to exercise a voice. The Memorandum also establishes a Bilateral Working Group that meet each year to prescribe a program of lower-level unit activities and exercises. It is a sign of how important these meetings are to the military organizations of both sides that the number of scheduled U.S.-Russian military-to-military programs each year remained in the dozens through 1998/21 despite recent ups and downs in the two states' diplomatic relations.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ McCarthy, "Comrades in Arms," 753-5. 20. Ibid., 735.

³⁹ In late 1995, there were around forty military-to-military events in 1996: by mid-1997, the number of similar events planned by Defense Secretary William Cohen and Defense Minister Igor Rodionov had expanded to over one-hundred; the number of 1998 was back down to around forty, in part because of funding problems on the Russian side, and in part because the Pentagon decided that having fewer programs of higher quality was better than having many programs that served no clear purpose.

Not all of these programs were actually implemented, largely because the Russian side had a tendency not to follow through on all of the activities, especially those planned for the latter half of each fiscal year. The Russian reason for the lack of follow-through was that funds were lacking. Russian forces have repeatedly refused offers of increased U.S. funding to assist Russian participation in the programs, leaving a surplus in the American budget allocated to military contacts, but that was considered on the Russian side to be an inappropriate use of this money.

However, expanding contacts beyond the bilateral U.S. relationship, cooperating alongside the U.S. as equal partners was seen as fundamentally different from operating under the command of NATO as a former Cold War adversary.⁴⁰

Unit-to-unit meetings and exercises have become so common that they now seem normal and no longer command much press attention in the United States. However, it is important to keep in mind that these programs, even more than the DMA agreement, have provoked a great deal of political controversy in the recent past, especially in Russia. Russian military leaders have had to brave a storm of protest over the conduct of joint military exercises with U.S. troops. Army maneuvers involving U.S. troops held in Totsk, Russia, in 1994, code named Peacekeeper-94, were delayed and almost canceled because of opposition from Russian nationalists, who feared that U.S. Green Berets and intelligence operatives would use them to

⁴⁰ Kimberly Marten Zisk, "Contact lenses: Explaining U.S.-Russian ties."

obtain information for a future invasion.⁴¹ There was nonetheless strong Russian Defense Ministry backing for the exercises. Col.-Gen. Eduard Vorobev, first deputy chief of Russian ground forces, complained about "the problems we had to go through to explain these exercises to the public."⁴²

Similar exercises the next year in Kansas, code named Peacekeeper-95 again came close to being canceled, this time because of Russian government disapproval of NATO bombing raids made against Bosnian Serbs in retaliation for their disruption of U.N. peacekeeping activities.⁴³ While the Kansas exercises did not face the same level of public disapproval by Americans that the Totsk exercises had by the Russians, there were some political voices raised against them, including at the congressional level, as a national security risk.⁴⁴

Certainly on the Russian side, the fact that exercises have gone forward illustrates how highly top military leaders value them, since it would be politically easier for them to throw their lot in with the nationalists who are often a dominant voice in the Russian media, and declare such institutions unworkable in an uncertain security climate. This was especially the case with the "Centrazbat 97" joint peacekeeping exercises held in the Tashkent area of Uzbekistan in September 1997 under the auspices of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, which included troops

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The author of this thesis was directly involved in preparation and conduct of this exercise.

⁴⁴ Kimberly Marten Zisk, "Contact lenses: Explaining U.S.-Russian ties."

from several post-Soviet states, Turkey, and the United States, as well as observers from Russia. The Russian Duma or parliament criticized the exercise , saying that "under the guise of ... peacekeeping ... the U.S. Armed Forces are intensively developing new potential theaters of military actions in the immediate vicinity of Russia's frontiers."⁴⁵ Yet, the deputy head of military training for the Russian Defense Ministry, Gen. Vitalii Sokolov, said that similar exercises should be held as often as possible, since no outside threat to Russia exists at present and since peacekeeping operations are the wave of the future.⁴⁶

Indeed, within a few months, Russian participants joined a multilateral NATO military exercise for the first time as full-fledged participants in large numbers at a marine-landing peacekeeping exercise code named "Cooperative Jaguar" in Denmark. However, this did not mean that the political issue was resolved. In August 1998, a U.S.-Russian naval exercise scheduled to take place in Vladivostok had to be moved to a different Russian location following local protests about American intentions. The fact that the exercise was not canceled indicates how important military contacts are to Russian officers.

Alongside these joint training exercises, there have been efforts made at higher education exchanges between Russian and U.S. officers as well. The first Russian graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Col. Andrei

⁴⁵ As cited by Kimberly Marten Zisk.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Demurenko, went on to become Chief of Staff of the Sarajevo peacekeeping sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While there is an agreement on the books to implement an exchange program between the Russian General Staff Academy and the U.S. National Defense University, American officers failed to come to the Academy due to a technical problem over being considered protected by diplomatic status.⁴⁷ In any case, U.S. personnel have undergone training at Russia's advanced tactical courses "Vystrel" for field-grade special force and military intelligence officers, which now include preparation for peacekeeping operations.

The crowning achievement of U.S.-Russian military cooperation thus far, and the end result of earlier peacekeeping exercises, has been the shoulder-to-shoulder service of forces from the two countries in Joint Endeavor peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. After lengthy and sometimes difficult negotiations at both the diplomatic and military levels about the level and character of Russian involvement in IFOR, Russia sent a mobile brigade drawn from its 76th and 98th airborne divisions to serve alongside a brigade of the U.S. 1st Armored Division, under the command of NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) U.S. Gen. George Joulwan in Bosnia in February 1996. As in the case of all other military-to-military contacts cited here, policy coordination has not always gone smoothly, and each side has attempted to preserve as much of its autonomy and influence over the process as possible. Yet,

⁴⁷ The problem stemmed from the fact that there is no Status of Forces Agreement signed between the two countries – author.

the achievements of this program in terms of enhanced stability and trust between the sides are clear.⁴⁸

Initial agreement on the plan was reached only after the U.S. side agreed that Joulwan would command Russian troops in his capacity as an American general and not as a NATO commander. This was primarily a salve for the wounded pride of Russian military officers, who at least at that time did see an important distinction, as noted previously, between serving alongside the United States and under NATO.

The success of the personal and political interactions between Russian and NATO troops in Bosnia worked to build trust, and undoubtedly paved the way for Russia's signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. In Joulwan's assessment:

We are building the foundation for the future, and ... I think a great deal of trust and confidence is coming. There are some tough issues left. . . that [need] to be worked out. But ... I'm very optimistic of the Russia-NATO relationship for the future in Europe.⁴⁹

Russia renewed its commitment to keep troops under U.S. command in Bosnia when the IFOR operation was extended into its SFOR stage in late 1996. Russian defense leaders have maintained this commitment even in the face of an anti-NATO nationalist upsurge at home, and despite, once again, complaints that the Defense Ministry violated protocol, bypassing the Foreign Ministry, [and] ... making decisions on foreign policy questions.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Kimberly Marten Zisk.

⁴⁹ Kimberly Marten Zisk, "Contact lenses: Explaining U.S.-Russian ties."

⁵⁰ These allegations were absolutely empty, even such issues as personnel rotation were coordinated through the

3. Military Motives for Contact and Cooperation.

Why have military leaders on both sides expended significant political capital to establish and continue these programs? The reason is that military- to-military contacts promise to provide their respective military organizations with important mission-related benefits.⁵¹ Three benefits stand out in particular. Both sides value the training and sharing of organizational experience that military-to-military exercises provide. The Russian side, in particular, values the opportunity to express a "voice", or to exert influence, in international security affairs through senior officer exchanges at a time when its international standing is in decline. Both sides value transparency, or information-sharing, for reasons ranging from building trust to ensuring stability by avoiding misperception.

First, both U.S. and Russian officers gain useful short-term training experience from these programs, especially in the area of peacekeeping.

On the Russian side, the most unguarded statement about the direct military training benefits of military-to-military cooperation was made by Bosnian commander Shevtsov, who said, "It is useful because we are learning a lot, we are knocking our weakened military muscle into shape."⁵²

MFA – author.

⁵¹ Kimberly Marten Zisk

⁵² As cited by Kimberly Marten Zisk.

The General Staff Academy offered no courses on peacekeeping operations, and hence Russian participation in the Totsk and Kansas exercises and in the Bosnian operation itself has provided officers with an educational opportunity that the Russian state may use elsewhere.

Key lessons learned have been in such areas as how to avoid unnecessary conflict and maintain neutrality while interacting with hostile civilians,⁵³ how to establish rules of engagement and communicate across language and procedural barriers in an ambiguous threat environment, and how to conduct public relations.

The issue of educating the Russian troops about harmonized rules of engagement in peacekeeping exercises was noticed because of military-to-military exchanges.

In addition to the practical training experience that the programs provide, the Russian side uses them to achieve a degree of voice or influence that it otherwise would not have over the new security environment evolving on its borders. One of the important functions served by military contact programs, especially private meetings between top military commanders, is to provide a forum for participants to raise security concerns with each other that might otherwise go unheeded.

⁵³ Ibid.

Perhaps the most eloquent statement of Russian thinking along these lines is Shevtsov's testimony before Russia's upper house of parliament concerning Russian participation in the IFOR mission. The commander said:

In conclusion, esteemed deputies, is Russia's participation in this operation necessary for NATO? It's necessary for Russia. NATO can solve these problems without Russia.... This operation is necessary not for the Defense Ministry, but for Russia as a European state.... Three hundred years ago we opened up a window to Europe thinking that we have interests there.... Virtually all European countries are taking part in this operation. We will refuse to take part once, we will refuse to take part twice-the third time everything will be done without the participation of Russia. By refusing to take part, we will hurt nobody but ourselves. We cannot consider ourselves to be a strong country, sit in these Russian corridors here and take no part in anything.⁵⁴

C. BROADENING EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RUSSIA

This chapter is a brief exercise in evaluating the subject of growing European defense self-awareness, and viability of a Russian point of view that the existing security arrangements for Europe should move away from sole reliance on the trans-Atlantic bond. Russia is explicitly and negatively concerned about NATO dominance in Europe, implying the overwhelming influence of the United States in European affairs.

An obvious test-ground for the relationship between the United States and Europe is the European Security and Defense Identity/Policy (ESDI/ESDP)

⁵⁴ As cited by Kimberly Marten Zisk, source – “Speeches in the Federation Council of the Russian Federation During the Discussion of the Question of Sending a Russian Military Contingent as Part of the Multinational Force.”

development. For the purpose of this thesis it is sufficient to address the ESDI and ESDP as one general process, and exploring differences between the two can only muddle a wide scope approach.

This chapter is structured around two following questions.

- Is it in the Russian interest to expressly favor the ESDI/ESDP Development vs. NATO Enlargement?
- Can the ESDI/ESDP development cause serious tensions in the trans-Atlantic zone? In other words, is it feasible to expect decoupling the U.S. and Europe?

The questions can be addressed from two classical perspectives used in international relations studies: liberalism and realism. The first would lead to the examination of nuances and multifold factors, and there will always be something left that is unnoticed or unrecognized. The latter mostly ignores the factor of internal politics, but it is more suitable for general descriptions of international security issues.

From the realist perspective, NATO is, to a great extent, a remnant of the Cold War. At the same time it has proved to be a useful political institution, bolstering European stability by solving a security dilemma for its members, individually and as an alliance. The system is there, and from the American point of view, is worth maintaining engagement. There are two different ways of doing this. One option is to find or create an external threat and keep the Alliance against it, as in a new “cold war” scenario. The other choice is to identify new multiple tasks and to make a

modernized European security structure more relevant to known and foreseeable challenges, and capable of dealing with them.

The Original NATO was not very much suited for the latter case. First, it lacked flexibility. Militarily, it was a means designed to fight a major conflict. In legal terms, there were complications also.

Strictly speaking, the Washington Treaty⁵⁵ is complementary to the Charter of the United Nations (Preamble, Articles 1, 5, and 7). The Treaty is also quite specific about the use of force. It is restricted both conditionally – self-defense as recognized by Article 51 of the UN Charter, and territorially (Article 6 of the WT).

In other words, NATO's freedom of action is limited to “measures as a result” (Article 5 of WT) of an armed attack on a member-country.

Another important factor affecting NATO's ability to act pro-actively is the principle of consensus. In cases of collective defense it does not hinder the decision-making process. By simply joining the Alliance, member-states have explicitly expressed their consent to be prepared to act on the basis of “an attack against one is the attack against all.” Nothing else would be as capable of generating the consensus needed to take action. This does not at all preclude the possibility of reaching an agreement on offensive actions, but the decision-making process would become more time-consuming and less efficient.

⁵⁵ NATO Handbook, pp. 395-399.

The ESDI/ESDP concept, if it is implemented with adjustments to the modern security environment in Europe, will alleviate the aforementioned contradictions. Since the major participants in the ESDI/ESDP are NATO members as well, strategic assessments will also be congruent. The ESDI/ESDP thinking could have never been possible without the luxury of the absence of a strategic threat to any European country, and in this respect overall security importance of NATO is unquestionable in this part of the world. This said, the ESDI/ESDP development is only feasible in the form of an extension and diversification of legitimate NATO missions. This format will allow addressing a wider range of security challenges of different magnitudes.

The trans-Atlantic bond is not likely to go away, but it might even strengthen because European military institutions, even if there are duplications, in their essence will be rooted in the NATO experience. The trans-Atlantic alliance for America is its most important global relationship.⁵⁶ It is the springboard for U.S. global involvement, allowing America and Europe together to serve “as the axis of global stability, the locomotive of the world’s economy, and the nexus of global intellectual capital... just as important they are both home to the world’s most successful democracies.”⁵⁷

Ironically, the more somebody thinks of offsetting Europe to the United States, the more the image of the latter is invoked. It comes in comparisons of continental–

⁵⁶ Zbignev Brezinski, “Living with a new Europe,” *The National Interest*, Summer 2000. Available [On line] from Pro Quest Direct Database, search (NATO AND EU AND Europe AND US).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

size centers of power, with the inescapable presumption that Europe, when it unites, will become America's peer, and potentially its rival.⁵⁸ Without going deeper into analysis, suffice to say that this pattern of thinking is an example of wishfulness devoid of reality, and leads to major misinterpretations.

Speaking of duplications, it does not seem to be a very serious issue because it can take place only in a minor bureaucratic form. No serious infrastructure, assets and inventory, other than those of NATO, are available for practical development of the ESDI/ESDP.

The going ahead of Europe with its military ambitions will allow bigger defense budgets to be successfully sold to the public. This will allow the United States to stay engaged in European affairs at a lower cost, to maintain the Alliance on its basic principles without revisiting its founding documents, and will not provoke suspicions about changing the defensive character of NATO.

Promoting the ESDI/ESDP will also allow for the continuation of the process of expansion of the Euro-Atlantic community without actually accepting new states in NATO and threatening the efficiency and coherence of the Alliance. European NATO members will provide the necessary nexus. Theoretically it is possible even to extend Article 5 of the WT to any territory through a chain or network of additional treaties.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The last consideration is important in the light of relations with Russia. Though the Euro-Atlantic expansion in this form will only increase western military capabilities and make them more flexible, it will allow Russia to shift to a less opposing rhetoric. “Allow” because the Russian political elite seems to be stuck with the dilemma of, on the one hand, overreacting to the perceived exclusion from the European security decision-making processes, and, on the other hand, understanding that Russian assertions of being a European nation imply responsible behavior and pragmatic acceptance of the mainstream thinking. If European security and defense arrangements are developed on the basis of something that Russia could claim as inherently belonging to, this will weaken the grounds for a bloc mentality, without actually changing the status quo in the Euro-Atlantic zone.

It could also be recommended that the relationship between the Euro-Atlantic security community and Russia should be strengthened not through the $n+1$ formulae, but rather by means of individual relations with Russia, becoming a network of intertwined connections for the part of the West, and remaining bilateral for Russia at every instance.

On the one hand, this system is better suited for developing confidence because it provides diverse channels of communication. It affords greater flexibility for alleviating inevitable disagreements as well.

On the other hand, integrated Western communities-Russia relationships should be institutionalized and maintained in parallel to bilateral networking. This

combination is particularly well suited for constituting legitimacy, first, because it provides a forum, and second, its diverse system prevents allegations of usurpation of important decision-making by bigger players.

At this point, it is important to say that the anti-NATO rhetoric in Russia is not the only prevalent way of expressing concerns about its relationship with the West. Voices of those who see EU enlargement as an even bigger challenge become more and more vocal. In the words of one local government officials in Kaliningrad region, "it's not NATO expansion we are afraid, but EU expansion."⁵⁹

Suggestions for this chapter:

- It is not in Russian long term interests to try exploit what it sees an opportunity to assert its more significant role in European affairs by playing up differences among members of trans-Atlantic community. These differences are not that significant in the first place, and attempts to overemphasize them would lead to alienation on the ground of Russia failing to understand the common values factor
- Russia should not expect that U.S. engagement in European politics and security matters would decrease at any time in the foreseeable future. Not in the least, because the ESDI/ESDP stem from and is based upon a

⁵⁹ Analyses by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, available [On line] at: <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1999/02/F.RU.990217140337.html>.

common successful, from the Western point of view, story of NATO security guarantees with the United States in its core

- There is no doubt that the U.S. itself will adjust its policy toward Europe to conform to new realities. No decoupling is feasible. “How the U.S.-European relationship is managed... must be Washington’s highest priority.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Article by Zbignev Brezinski “Living with a new Europe” in *The National interest*, Summer 2000. Available [On line] at Pro Quest Direct Database, search (NATO+ EU+Europe+US).

III. CONCLUSION

In 1990, a totally new security paradigm emerged in the world: the USSR ceased to exist, its military forces withdrew from Eastern Europe, Warsaw Pact was disbanded and Germany reunited. In their essence these events were a deep and serious international crisis. Nobody had predicted thus process and, in its development, theory was lagging behind the practices. Its peaceful regulation was based on the agreement between the world's major political players to create a common European space that would include the Newly Independent states (a buzz term of the time) on the territory of the former USSR on equal terms in a new European security system.⁶¹

Between 1990-1994 Russian political elite believed that the end of the Cold War had the following meaning: all the European countries had decided to create a common security space, in which neither the West or the East would continue to exist. These perceptions created a base for euphoric romanticism of the early days after the end of the Cold War, when people experienced a great relief over disappearance of almost half a century threat of a major military conflict. That also led to expectations that NATO would never again be viewed as an adversary. The rhetoric adopted by the Alliance about its changing character contributed to this optimism.

⁶¹ Irina Isakova, "Relations with Russia: go slow, don't spoil the illusion...," *RUSI Journal*, available [On line] at Pro Quest Direct Database, search (NATO+ EU+Europe+US+Enlargement).

The political atmosphere changed when two factors came into reality at the same time. First, the advent of NATO enlargement, and, second, growing awareness of the Russian people of the magnitude of the nation's economical and socio-political crisis.

The process of NATO enlargement from the very beginning was perceived in Russia as targeting the strengthening of the Euro-Atlantic unity in order to enforce American influence on the Continent at the expense of Russia. The fear was rooted in the historic perception of antagonistic character of Russian and Anglo-Saxon interests. The factor that was believed to give the start to the Cold War in the first place. The famous "... to keep Russia out" was interpreted in its straightforward meaning, without contextual connotation of the time when Lord Ismay phrased it.

The genuine Russian concern appears to be not the threat of military confrontation, but exactly to find the country isolated from a well structured and secured elitist club of European nations.

Therefore, the main conclusion of this thesis is that Russia's adamant negative reaction to NATO enlargement stems from the historic process of having to constantly demand to be recognized as a legitimate actor in European political and security affairs.

Another argument is that Russia, by exploiting an anti-NATO enlargement posture, has actually exacerbated the issue. Moscow's position started to be described as infringement on sovereign rights of independent democratic countries, as an

attempt to create its zone of influence on the territory where historically this aspect bears a very sensitive character.

On the other hand, the major NATO member – the U.S. – contributed to this negative development by showing at times direct disregard to Russian claims of having a say in international affairs. The case of Kosovo triggered the self-feeding rhetoric that pulled the relationship between Russia and the West back to that of the Cold War.

The latter case showed another side too. It can be analytically described as a “litmus test” for the real common interest of the West and Russia to overcome differences and avoid a critical rift in mutual relations. Despite the heated phraseology and articulated suspicions the situation did not develop into an actual confrontation between NATO and Russia. Both nations ended up working on the issue together.

What could be possible suggestions for the improvement of mutual relations between the U.S. and Russia ?

It should be advised that Russia stops exploiting threatening-like rhetoric against any aspirant countries joining NATO. It only has an adverse affect by justifying the argument that new members should be admitted on the grounds of potential threat from Russia and that it should be demonstrated to Moscow that it will never be able to obstruct expression of the free will of the neighboring nations.

On the western European side, it would be very much beneficial to keep Russia involved in all security and stability building measures with the purpose of confidence building and keeping, this time, Russia in.

There is evidence that the Russian political elite rationally accepts that the existence of NATO in its current capacity is a positive factor for Europe. It is a guarantor of stability in the relations along the internal West-West axis, and also in reforming and strengthening it as a reliable mechanism of European stability that can become one of the pillars of the new collective security architecture of the continent. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a defensive military and political union of democratic states is not a military threat for a democratic Russia.⁶²

However, Russia can not disregard its other key interest: achieving and strengthening social, political and economic stability inside the country. It is from this point of view, which is political and psychological, that NATO enlargement contradicts Russia's national interests. The danger lies in the emergence of the feeling of military and political isolation of Russia, in the revival of anti-Western and militaristic trends in the public.

⁶² Theses of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, "Russia and NATO," available [On line] at <http://www.svop.ru>, April 2001.

This is even more true, since the West did not (and could not) find arguments which would convince the Russian society that the advance of NATO to the borders of Russia by embracing the former allies of the USSR, speculating on the idea of "Russian imperialism", would vitally serve the interests of Russia - especially considering the fact that Russia itself is left out by expanding Atlantic Alliance.

Russia's image of itself, and its focus of efforts in foreign policy will remain a complex subject of debate within Russia for years to come. This is true if you only consider the fact that the geographic scope and diversity of the country will continue to nourish the tendency of asserting a special role for Russia outside of Western Europe in the Eurasian landmass. This will always be source of debate between the atlanticists world⁶³ and the Eurasianists.

What can be predicted is that even if Russian political elite and public in general come to grips with identifying Russia's proper relationship to the West, security debates will continue on the realist-geopolitical basis. With the achievement of a certain level of socio-economic and political stability there might be less reasons for insecure reflections on the relationship with the West.

⁶³ Alexander A.Sergounin, "Post security Thinking in Russia, " available [On line] from CIAO database, <https://www.c.c.columbia.edu>, search (Russia+NATO+enlargement+security), March 2001.

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